United Nations A/HRC/38/G/5

General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 July 2018

Original: English

Human Rights Council
Thirty-eighth session
18 June–6 July 2018
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Note verbale dated 2 July 2018 from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and has the honour to provide herewith the comments of the Government of Greece in relation to the written statement submitted by the "Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe", a non-governmental organization in special consultative status (A/HRC/38/NGO/68) (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Greece kindly requests the Office of the High Commissioner to circulate the present note verbale and the text attached* as a document of the thirty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council under agenda item 3.

* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

GE.18-12143(E)
1812143

Please recycle

Annex to the note verbale dated 2 July 2018 from the Permanent Mission of Greece at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Comments of the Government of Greece in relation to the written statement submitted by the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (A/HRC/38/NGO/68)

At the outset, we would like to stress that we regret once again witnessing a Government Organized NGO following an intentionally misleading strategy within the Human Rights Council, hoping to gain from unsubstantiated accusations.

We deplore having to reply to the written statement by the "NGO" "FWTTE" for two reasons: First, its authors refer to issues already addressed over a year ago, during the 34th session of the Human Rights Council, and second, the statement twists into accusations of Human Rights violations cases where the law was applied without any discrimination, as well as other ones that were dismissed before going to trial.

The statement refers to a criminal complaint filed by the political party "Golden Dawn" in July 2016, asking that the march organized by the "Friendship, Equality and Peace" (F.E.P.) party be prohibited. This complaint was dismissed by the competent Prosecutor and filed without proceedings. The mention of this case is clearly aiming to create a false impression regarding the Greek judicial system. Regarding the deposition of the same party's president in October 2016, the FEP President was called by the Prosecutor to provide substantiated evidence backing up his statement accusing Greece of having murdered the late minority politician, Sadik Ahmet.

These events can under no circumstances be qualified as a "policy of intimidation of the minority", as the statement of the NGO is claiming.

With regard to the Mayor of Iasmos, as we already stated in 2017, media reports confirmed that he was repeatedly using the official vehicle of the municipality for private purposes, something prohibited by law. He was arrested following complaints made by citizens. Once again, this is not a case of political intimidation of a minority representative, as falsely claimed in the statement, but just the implementation of legal provisions with regard to the use of publicly funded means of transport for private purposes.

Concerning the case of Mr Ahmet Mete, the Public Prosecutor brought charges against him following a statement inciting to sedition. Specifically, Mr Mete expressed the wish that the President of the F.E.P. party become the "Rauf Denktash of Thrace". Rauf Denktash was a Cypriot politician, who in 1983 proceeded to the unlawful act of unilateral proclamation of a secessionist state in the northern part of Cyprus, an act that has been categorically condemned by the United Nations Security Council in successive resolutions. Thus, Mr Ahmet Mete has been prosecuted and he will stand trial later this month, for inviting a Greek politician to proceed to the secession of part of the Greek territory.

Furthermore, with regard to Mr Ibrahim Serif, he proceeded to a mass circumcision ceremony without having any license or authorization to perform these surgical operations. It goes without saying that neither Greece nor any other country in the world would jeopardize the health of its youth by allowing unauthorized persons to proceed to assist on public surgical operations.

Finally, regarding Mr Koray Hasan, he held renovation works in a building without having the administrative authorization to proceed accordingly.

In conclusion, we would like to remind the NGO that Greece fully upholds the minority rights of the Muslim minority of Thrace as they are provided for in the Lausanne Peace Treaty, including their religious rights and their freedom of expression.